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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: CROSS-STRAIT RELATIONS

Summary: Taiwan's major Chinese-language dailies focused their coverage 23-26 on the decision of the chamber in charge of the Presidential Office Allowance for State Affairs case that the case does not violate the Constitution; the indictment of former National Science Council Vice Chairman Hsieh Ching-chih for his alleged involvement in corruption; the Ministry of Transportation and Communications' approval of the launch of the high-speed railway amid safety concerns from scholars and experts; and on Jaw Shau-kong, former Chairman of UFO Radio, as the final buyer of the Broadcasting Corporation of China (BCC), one of the KMT's assets.

In terms of editorials, the pro-independence, limited circulation, English-language "Taiwan News" editorialized that Taiwan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs should adopt a new offensive that "sets fires" worldwide to force Beijing to spend its resources and time in 'extinguishing fires.'

The pro-independence, limited-circulation, English-language "Taipei Times" speculated in its editorial that the postwar situation after China's possible invasion of Taiwan will resemble the takeover of Taiwan by the KMT after World War II. The editorial added that two factors, namely the pragmatism of the Taiwan people to accept their lot and U.S. economic aid, helped to stabilize Taiwan's social situation right after the takeover and questioned what China's strategy will be without these factors. End summary.

A) "New Offensive Needed in Diplomacy"

The pro-independence, English-language "Taiwan News" [circulation: 20,000] pointed out in its editorial (12/26):

"During the past year, Taiwan has regrettably witnessed a deterioration in our diplomatic position largely due to China's full-scale offensive to reach out to Taipei's allies in Africa and Central America, its continued obstruction of our efforts to join the World Health Assembly [sic] and the United Nations and the continued absence of the Taiwan president from the annual 'informal summit' of the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation forum. ...

"In our view, the pursuit of a 'pluralist diplomacy,' defined by the DPP government as a way to utilize Taiwan's democratic achievements and the energy of civil society, and 'leadership diplomacy' through overseas visits by Taiwan's national leaders, is still correct.

"However, from the strategic and diplomatic points of view, it is necessary for the DPP government and especially the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to mobilize all of its overseas embassies and representative offices to 'set fires' everywhere in order to force Beijing to spend its resources and time in 'extinguishing fires.'

"For example, instead of engaging in 'money games' with the PRC, Taiwan should provide evidence to its diplomatic partners and other nations that Beijing has not and will not deliver on its extravagant promises and emphasize the concrete and pragmatic contribution of

Taiwan's assistance efforts to improving grassroots living standards and capability building [sic].

"Moreover, Taiwan should keep reminding those countries that are contemplating embracing Beijing of the detrimental effects accompanied with [sic] the PRC's influence, especially the negative impact of the dumping of Chinese products on local employment and on economic prosperity.

"No less critical is for the Foreign Ministry and the Government Information Office to launch a concerted publicity offensive worldwide to shatter the widely held but mistaken image of the PRC as a 'peaceful rising power' and show the world the true face of military expansionism and authoritarianism embedded with Beijing's so-called 'peaceful rise.'

"Most importantly, the DPP government must make more effective efforts to incorporate civil society into Taiwan's external affairs and promote deeper participation with equality and respect for pluralistic views with NGOs. . . ."

B) "What Follows a War with China?"

The pro-independence, English-language "Taipei Times" [circulation: 30,000] editorialized (12/23):

"... China has plans of some nature drawn up for an invasion. But it is not clear that Beijing has the remotest idea how to govern an occupied territory that was once a wealthy democracy -- and this does not factor in the logistics of feeding and sheltering an occupying army and bureaucracy.

"The idea that Taiwanese civilians would be unwilling to confront PLA forces and a military government -- especially after atrocities occur -- is not convincing; what would be needed to mitigate such problems is a collaborationist administration. An interesting

question that follows is: Who would they choose? And from this: Are such people identifiable now?

"The likelihood of a collaborationist government being able to competently deal with the international economic response to an invasion is low -- indeed, Beijing would probably be struggling hard to defend 'mainland' China's economic integrity.

"Other changes that might shock Taiwan's middle class from its stupor would be the expulsion of selected foreigners and organizations, the purging of universities and possible revoking of citizenship for people of 'non-Chinese' descent and their title to property, and restrictions on movement.

"The best-case scenario for China would see a pragmatic public accept their lot -- much as Taiwanese did following the flight of KMT troops to Taiwan in the late 1940s and early 1950s. But after that time the KMT was boosted by US support and sensible economic reforms that spread wealth across most sectors of society. It is not clear how China would act in an occupied Taiwan, and whether 'sensible' policy would have much role to play.

"The more one fleshes out a postwar scenario, the more insane an invasion appears. With Beijing, however, this does not lessen the likelihood of one. Of prime concern is the certainty that a postwar administration would quickly earn the contempt -- then hatred -- of most Taiwanese, a situation mirroring that of 60 years ago. If China wishes to proceed with this scenario, it had better be prepared to crush dissent ruthlessly and so destroy its uncertain international reputation -- and kiss its fantasy of a spiritually united China goodbye."

WANG